

Consumer Insights Tracker

February 2024

The Consumer Insights Tracker is an online monthly tracking survey commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). It monitors the behaviour and attitudes of adult consumers aged 16+ in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in relation to food.

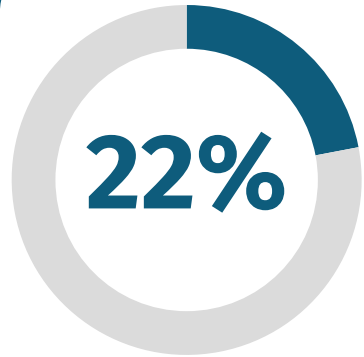
The survey includes topics such as food availability, food affordability, consumer concerns in relation to food, confidence in the food supply chain and in the FSA as a regulator.



Key findings for February 2024

Please click the headings to be directed to the specific section of the report

Food affordability



22% are worried about their household being able to afford food in the next month, which has decreased over time.

Food affordability



9% report cutting the size of, or skipping, meals because there wasn't enough money to buy food. This rises to 18% amongst those with a household income of <£20,000.

Food availability



20% are worried about there being enough food available for their household in the next month, in line with last month (20%)

Food concerns



88% are concerned about food prices and 76% are concerned about food poverty and food inequality. Both figures are in line with last month.

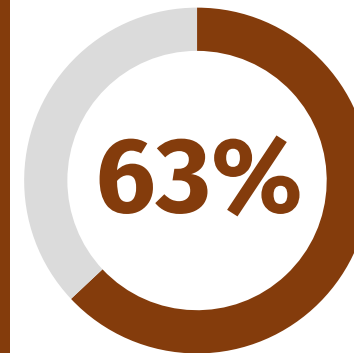
Food supply chain



Confidence in the food supply chain is at 60%, comparable with January (59%)

The FSA

Of those with some knowledge of the FSA

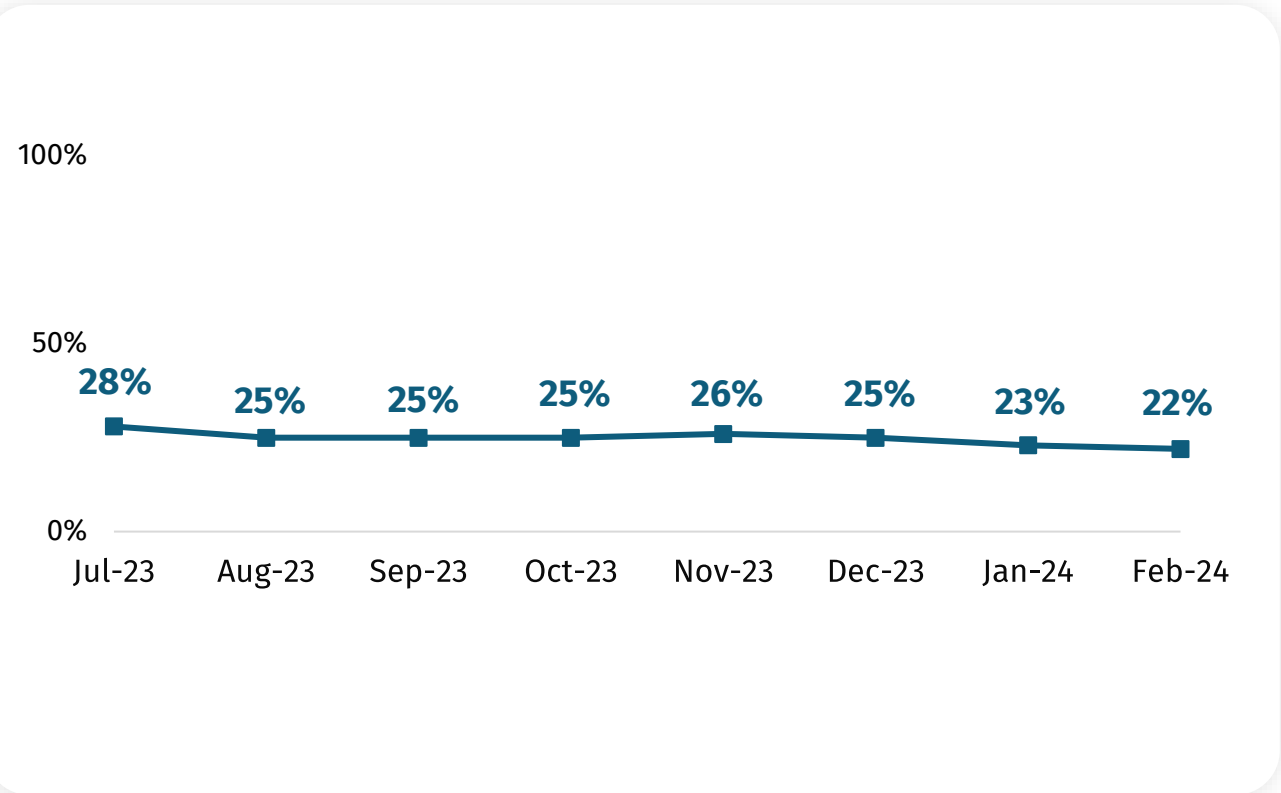


63% trust the FSA to do its job. This is statistically significantly higher than in January (56%).

One in five (22%) are worried about their household not being able to afford food in the next month

This has shown a downwards trend over time.

Proportion who reported worrying about their household not being able to afford food in the next month



Q3m. To what extent, if at all, are you worried you/your household will not be able to afford food in the next month?

Base: All in February 2024 (n=2,066), January (n=2,038), December (n=2,026), November (n=2,064), October (n=2,062), September (n=2,057), August (n=2,044) and July 2023 (n=2,085)

▲▼ Statistically significant differences compared to January shown with arrows

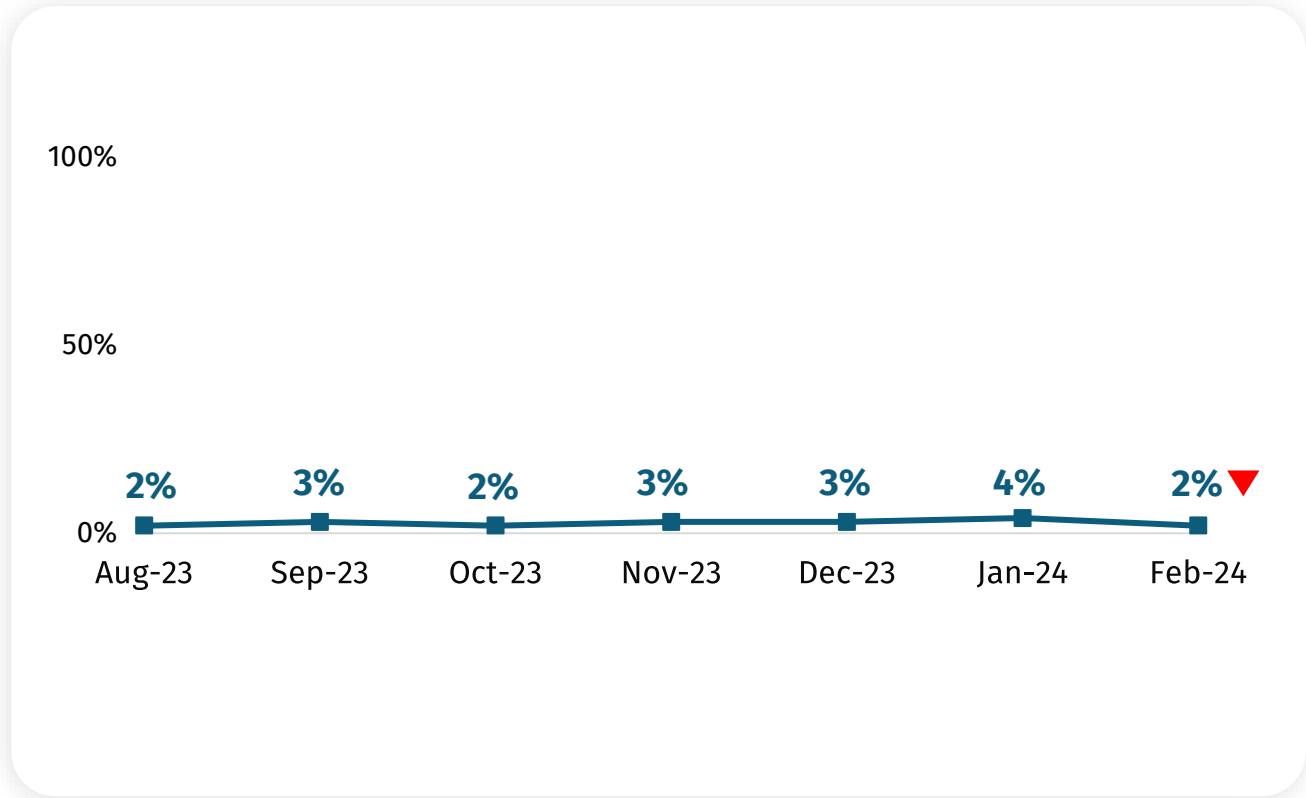
2% report that they, or someone in their household, received a free parcel of food from a food bank or other emergency food provider in the last month

This is statistically significantly lower than the 4% figure recorded in January 2024, but in line with all other months from August 2023.

Q3. In the last month, have you or anyone else in your household received a free parcel of food from a food bank or other emergency food provider?

Base: All in February 2024 (n=2,066), January (n=2,038), December (n=2,026), November (n=2,064), October (n=2,062), September (n=2,057) and August 2023 (n=2,044)

Proportion who reported receiving a food parcel from a food bank or emergency food provider

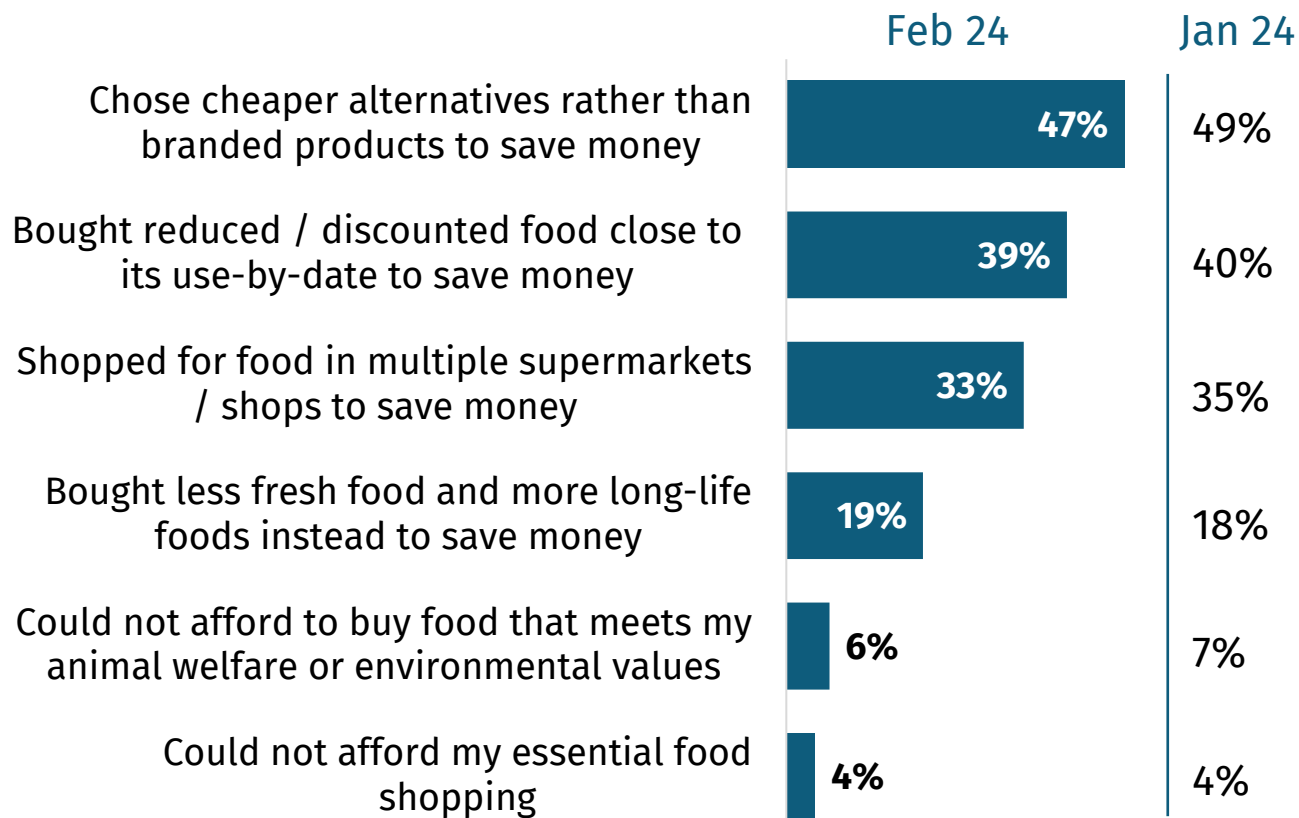


▲▼ Statistically significant differences compared to January shown with arrows

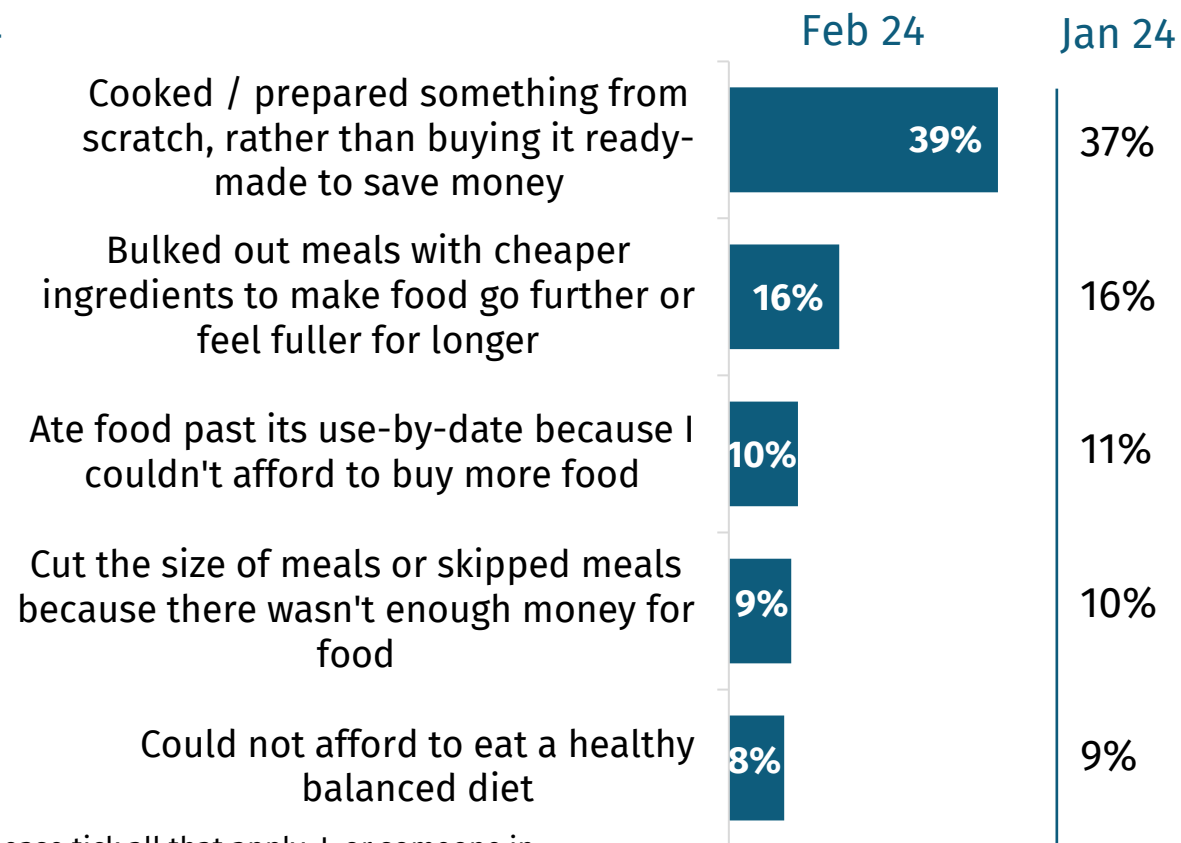
72% report at least one of the following statements applies to them or their household

This is in line with the proportion reporting this in January (72%).

Shopping statements



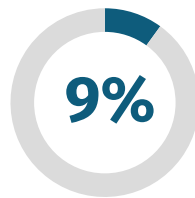
Cooking and eating statements



Q6. In the last month, did any of the following apply to you, or someone else in your household? Please tick all that apply. I, or someone in my household...

Base: All in February 2024 (n=2,066) and January (n=2,038). Please note: Total values do not add to 100% as participants could select multiple responses.

▲▼ Statistically significant differences compared to January shown with arrows



Total report cutting the size of/skipping meals

Proportion who report cutting the size of meals or skipping meals by demographic group

Limiting health condition or disability

Children in the household



Yes

17%



No

6%



Yes

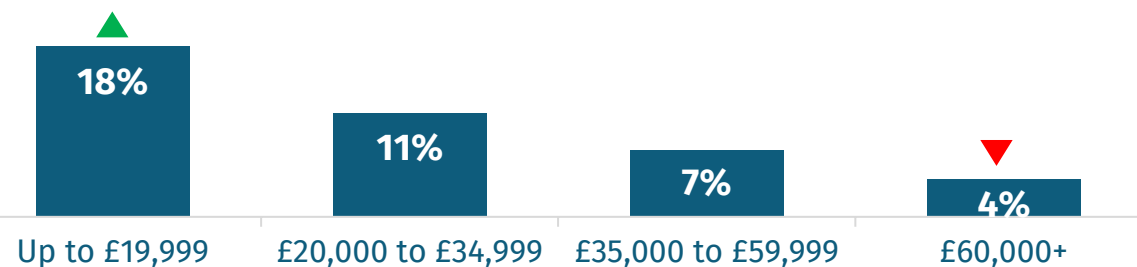
14%



No

7%

Gross household income



▲▼ Statistically significant differences against the total shown with arrows

The following households are significantly more likely to report cutting the size of, or skipping, meals because there wasn't enough money for food

- Participants with a limiting disability/health condition
- Households with children
- Households with <£20,000 income

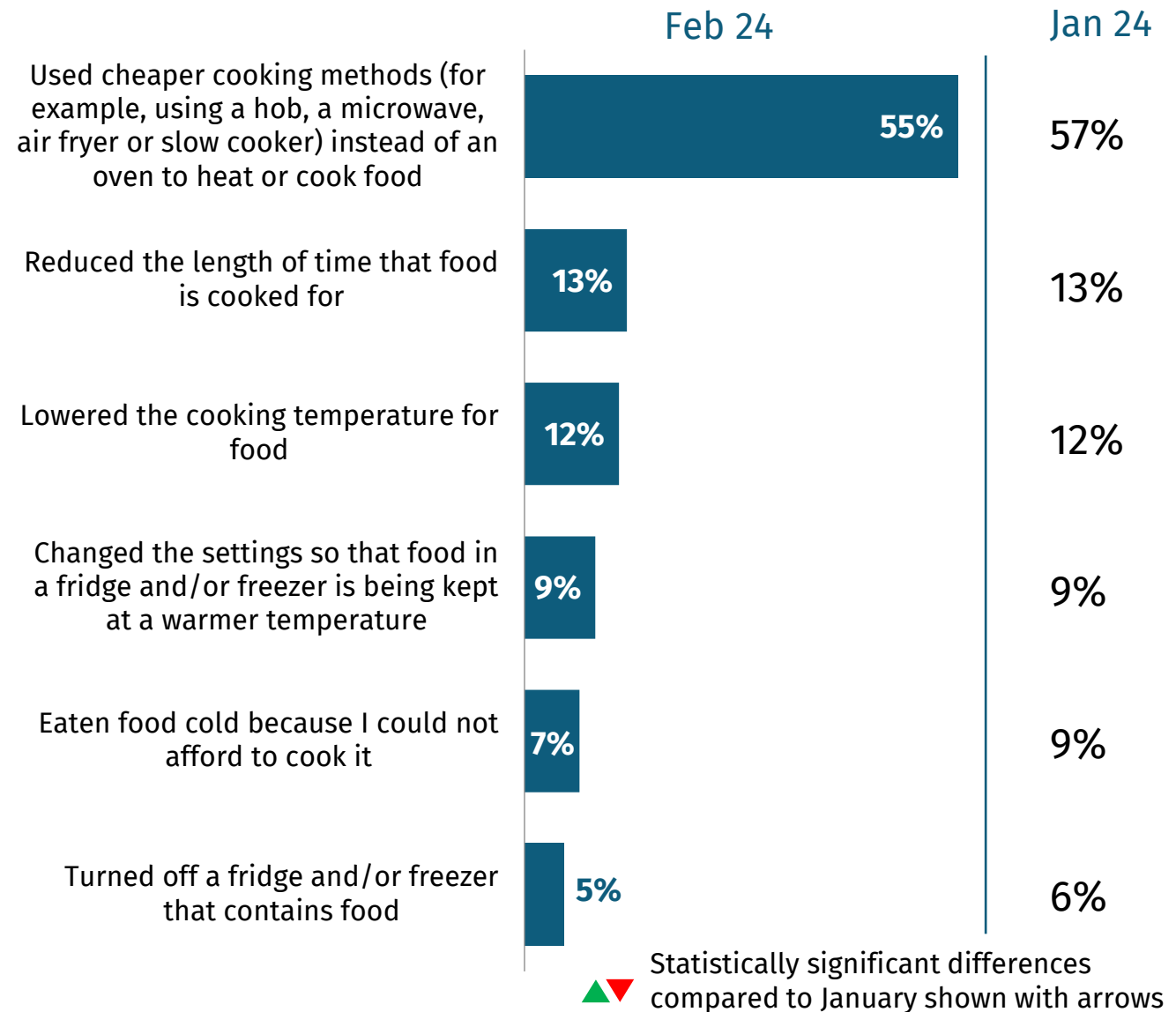
This has been consistent since August 2023.

Q6. In the last month, did any of the following apply to you, or someone else in your household? Cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food. Base: All in February 2024 (n=2,066)

Those with a limiting health problem or disability have said that 1) they have either a health problem or disability and 2) it limits their daily life either a lot or a little.

Households with children are defined as those who have children aged under 18 living in their household.

Proportion who did any of the following to reduce energy bills or save money in the last month



55% have used cheaper cooking methods instead of an oven to heat or cook food in the last month

7% have eaten food cold because they couldn't afford to cook it

These figures are comparable with January 2024.

Q8m. In the last month, which, if any, of the following have you done to reduce your energy bills and save money?

Base: All in February 2024 (n=2,066) and January (n=2,038)

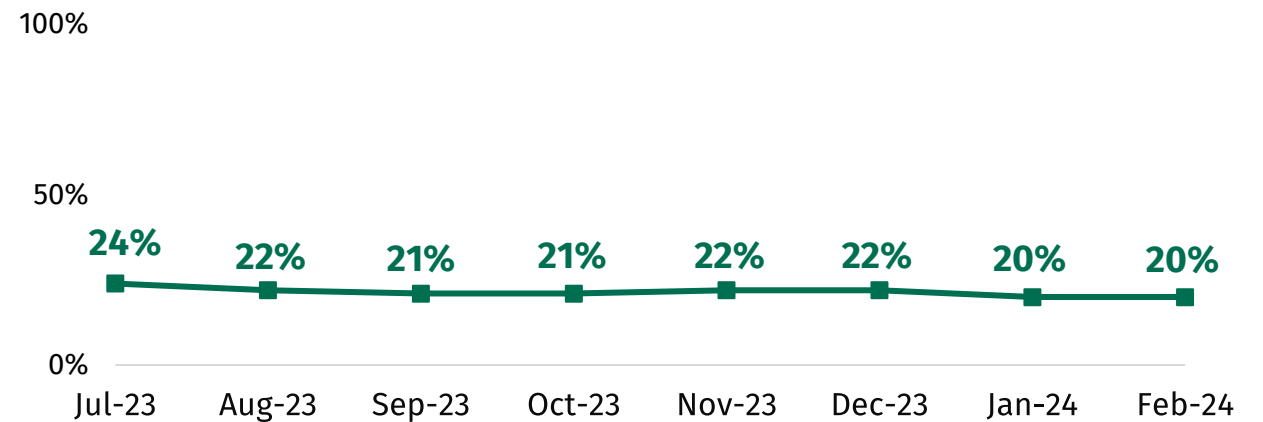
One in five (20%) are worried about there not being enough food available for their household in the next month

This figure is statistically significantly lower than in July 2023, though comparable to all other months.

Q2m. To what extent, if at all, are you worried about there not being enough food available for you/your household to buy in the next month?

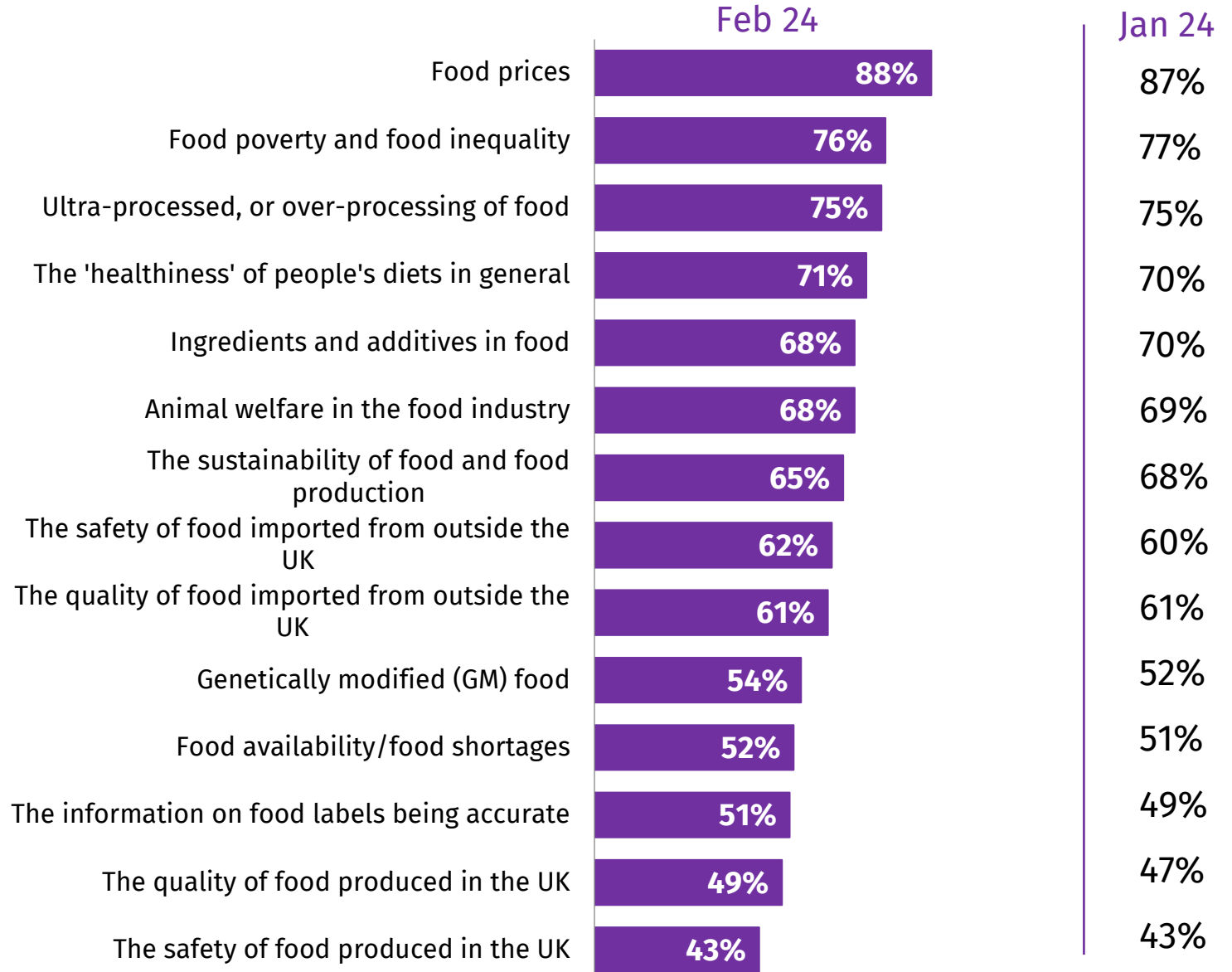
Base: All in February 2024 (n=2,066), January (n=2,038), December (n=2,026), November (n=2,064), October (n=2,062), September (n=2,057), August (n=2,044) and July (n=2,085) 2023

Proportion who reported worrying about there not being enough food available for their household in the next month



▲▼ Statistically significant differences compared to January shown with arrows

Proportion who reported concern about food by topic



▲▼ Statistically significant differences compared to January shown with arrows

88% are concerned about food prices, 76% are concerned about food poverty and food inequality

These figures are comparable with January 2024.

Q12. Thinking about food in the UK in general. At the moment, how concerned, if at all, do you feel about each of the following topics?

Base: All in February 2024 (n=2,066) and January (n=2,038)

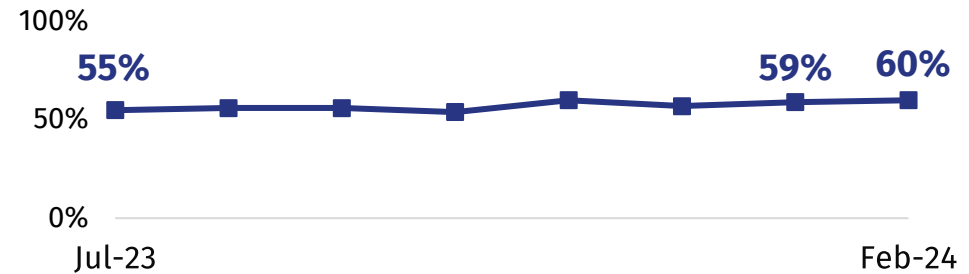
Respondents were shown all of the topics listed and asked how concerned, if at all, they felt about each. Figures shown in chart are the proportion 'highly concerned' or 'somewhat concerned'.

Overall, 60% are confident in the food supply chain

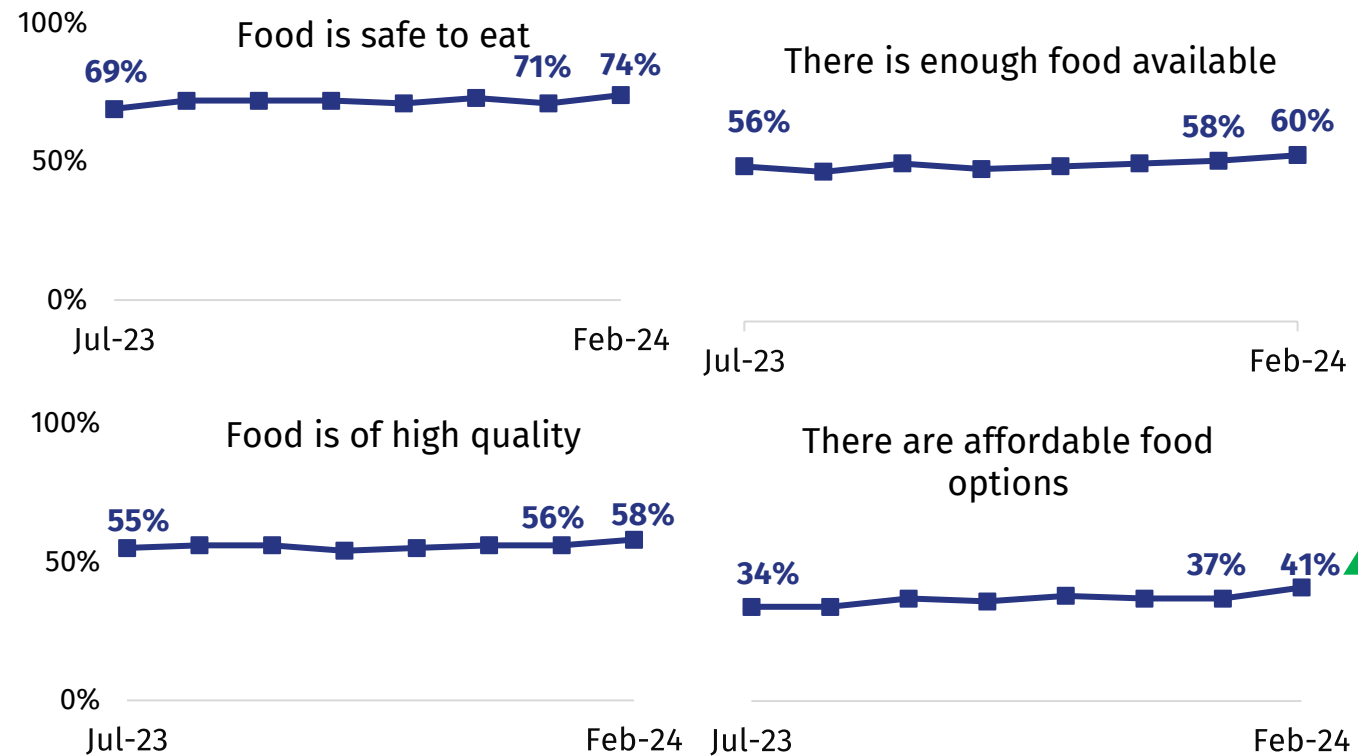
This is comparable to January 2024.

The proportion who report confidence that those involved in the food supply chain ensure there are affordable food options has seen a small, but statistically significant, shift from January to February 2024.

Proportion who reported confidence in the food supply chain



Proportion who reported confidence that those involved in the food supply chain ensure that...



▲ ▼ Statistically significant differences compared to January shown with arrows

Q13. How confident are you in the food supply chain? That is all the processes involved in bringing food to your table.

Q14. How confident are you that those involved in the food supply chain in the UK...

Base: All in February 2024 (n=2,066), January (n=2,038), December (n=2,026), November (n=2,064), October (n=2,062), September (n=2,057), August (n=2,044) and July 2023 (n=2,085)

63% of those with some knowledge of the FSA trust the FSA to do its job

This is statistically significantly higher than in January 2024.

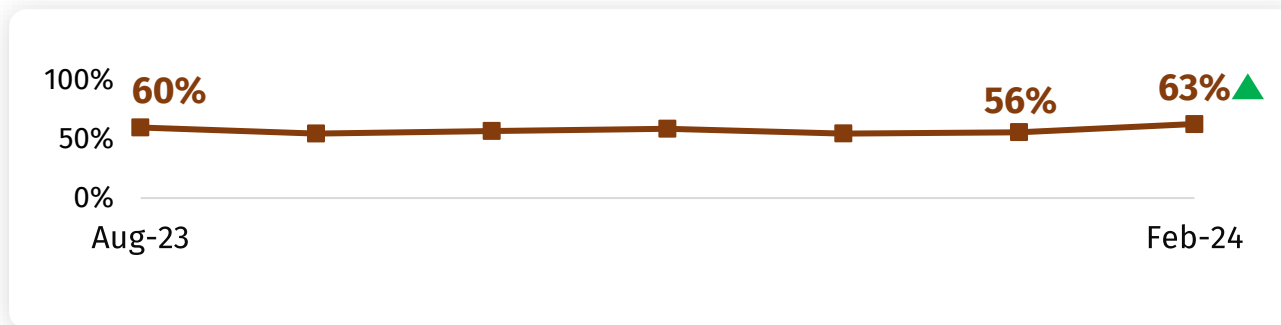
78% are confident that the FSA protects the public from food-related risks, which is also statistically significantly higher than in January.

Q16. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the Government Agency responsible for food safety in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. How much do you trust or distrust the Food Standards Agency to do its job? That is to make sure that food is safe and what it says it is.

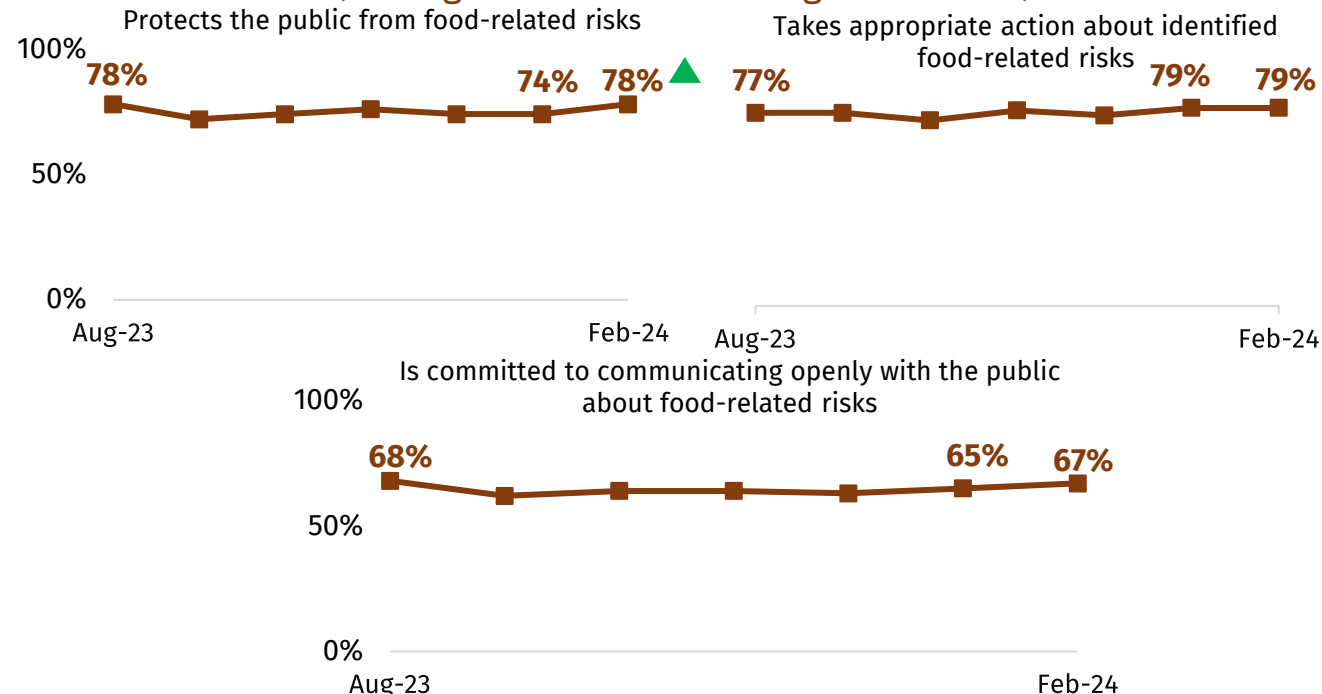
Q15. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the Government Agency responsible for food safety in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. How confident are you that the Food Standards Agency...

Base: Those who know a little / a lot about the FSA in February 2024 (n=1,127) January (n=1,168) December (n=1,134), November (n=1,183), October (n=1,175), September (n=1,161) and August 2023 (n=1,126)

Proportion that trust the FSA to do its job (among those with knowledge of the FSA)



Proportion who reported confidence that the FSA... (among those with knowledge of the FSA)



▲ ▼ Statistically significant differences compared to January shown with arrows

Background and methodological information

Changes in approach

Following a [review of the FSA's Consumer Insights Tracker](#) by the FSA's Advisory Committee for Social Science (ACSS), the project was recommissioned in early 2023.

In July 2023, the Consumer Insights Tracker was transitioned to a new supplier, YouGov. Changing supplier provided the opportunity to make the following methodological changes:

- Review the questionnaire content and question wording
- Expand the sample to include adults aged 16+ (previously 16-75)
- Boost the sample to include a larger number of participants from Northern Ireland
- Utilise a panel survey approach (previously an omnibus approach was used to collect the data)

Due to these methodological differences, data captured by YouGov (from July 2023 onwards) should not be directly compared to data captured by the previous supplier (April 2020 – June 2023).

Method

- This research was conducted online using the YouGov panel which gives access to 400,000 active panellists in the UK.
- This report presents findings from February 2024. Where appropriate, comparisons are made to previous waves since July 2023.
- 2,066 adults across England, Wales and Northern Ireland took part in the February survey between the 2nd to 5th February 2024.
- Quotas were set by age, gender, education and region. The data is also weighted to be representative of the population by these demographic variables. All results are based on final weighted data.

Notes for interpretation

- Figures may not add up to 100% on graphs due to rounding, or in some questions, respondents were able to select multiple answers.
- Significance testing is applied to the data to compare and determine whether a difference is “real”, or if it has occurred by chance (because not everyone in the population has been surveyed).
- Any differences between demographic groups and month to month which are reported (with arrows) are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.
- If you require further information on the statistical significance testing carried out, please contact the [social science team](#).
- Where analysis is conducted by IMD, respondents are categorised within the country where they live, before a combined measure is created for the full sample.

For more information:

Visit our [Consumer Insights Tracker Webpage](#)

View the [Consumer Insights Tracker data tables](#)

Or please contact the FSA Social Science team
(socialscience@food.gov.uk)